

Relief to flood ravaged West Bengal

1404. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a flood of rare severity ravaged West Bengal during 2000 and whether the State Government spent Rs.580 crores for rescue and relief operations at the cost of its other developmental activities;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the State got only Rs.103 crore as additional support from Government, against the projected demand of Rs. 1487 crores; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and the course of actions contemplated to rectify the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (c) As per the existing arrangements governing financing of relief expenditure as per the approved recommendations of the Eleventh Finance Commission, to deal with a Calamity of rare severity for which the State's Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) would not be sufficient, assistance is admissible from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) subject to the provisions of the scheme governing the said fund. Releases from the NCCF are strictly in accordance with norms which are pre-determined. These norms relate both to items of expenditure and their scale. In this matter the Central Government has no discretion.

Based on these norms, the entitlement of the State of West Bengal for flood in September, 2000 from the NCCF was assessed by a Central Team and it worked out to Rs.103.25 crores. It may be added that similar criteria has been applied in case of all State needing assistance from the NCCF.